"I burned my BIBLE"

My name is Alfredo Florez. On July 1st, 1951 I said my last mass as a Roman Catholic priest, at St. Anne's Church of Brentwood, Long Island. I told my congregation that salvation is not through the Church or through the mass, but through the blood of Christ alone. Then I walked out of the church and left Catholicism behind me forever. It sounds easy . . . but my decision to leave the priesthood was preceded by months and years of spiritual and mental agony. No one but a former priest can fully understand what it means to a Roman Catholic priest to sever all his ties with the Church.

I was born in Peru in 1914 into a humble family of five. When I was very young, my mother bought me a Bible because I loved to read. It soon became one of my most prized possessions and I read and reread the stories of Jesus and told them over to my family.

However, when I entered a Roman Catholic monastery to study for the priesthood, one of my first acts of obedience was to burn my precious Bible because it was a Protestant version.

After my ordination as a priest in 1937, I devoted myself to teaching and to further study. However, the further I pursued these studies, the more dissatisfied I became.

In May, 1951, a stranger, sensing my spiritual unrest, gave me a copy of THE CONVERTED CATHOLIC MAGAZINE. Not long afterwards, I came in contact with Christ's Mission and told them of my doubts and disillusionment. Soon afterwards, I realized that I was personally justified by faith and born again. Since that day, what a joy has been mine! With the financial help of Christ's Mission I am now studying in an evangelical school for the Protestant ministry.

Through the centuries,

the backbone of the Roman Catholic Church has been its priesthood. The Church has depended upon her priests to control the people and to keep the Church treasury full. The Church in turn has exerted a strict control over the priests—a control which makes it very difficult for priests to leave the Church when they become disillusioned.

Recently in the United States and in South America, many priests have become disgusted and disillusioned with the Church of Rome. Christ's Mission has been privileged to aid hundreds of these priests both spiritually and economically. Our files are full of stories like the five in this folder.

These five stories have told you of the glorious conversions of five ex-priests. They have not told you much about the rehabilitation that each of these priests had to go through after coming out of the Church.

Few Protestants realize what it means to a priest to leave the Church. When they come out, most of them are ostracized by family and former friends. They are excommunicated by the Church. Without money, friends or any means of support they are completely alone in an alien world — a world they have never faced before as adults.

Some ex-priests find the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour while they are still in the Roman Catholic Church. Others are still seekers after the truth when they come out. Many others become agnostics. Christ's Mission endeavors to help those who are either converted or ripe for conversion — to aid them both spiritually and economically until they become firmly grounded in the truth and completely adjusted to life outside the priesthood.

The world should know that there are thousands of these priests who are ready to leave the Church of Rome when and if they receive help. Christ's Mission can only help them to the extent that your gifts make this ministry possible.

Dr. Walter M. Montaño
Executive Director of
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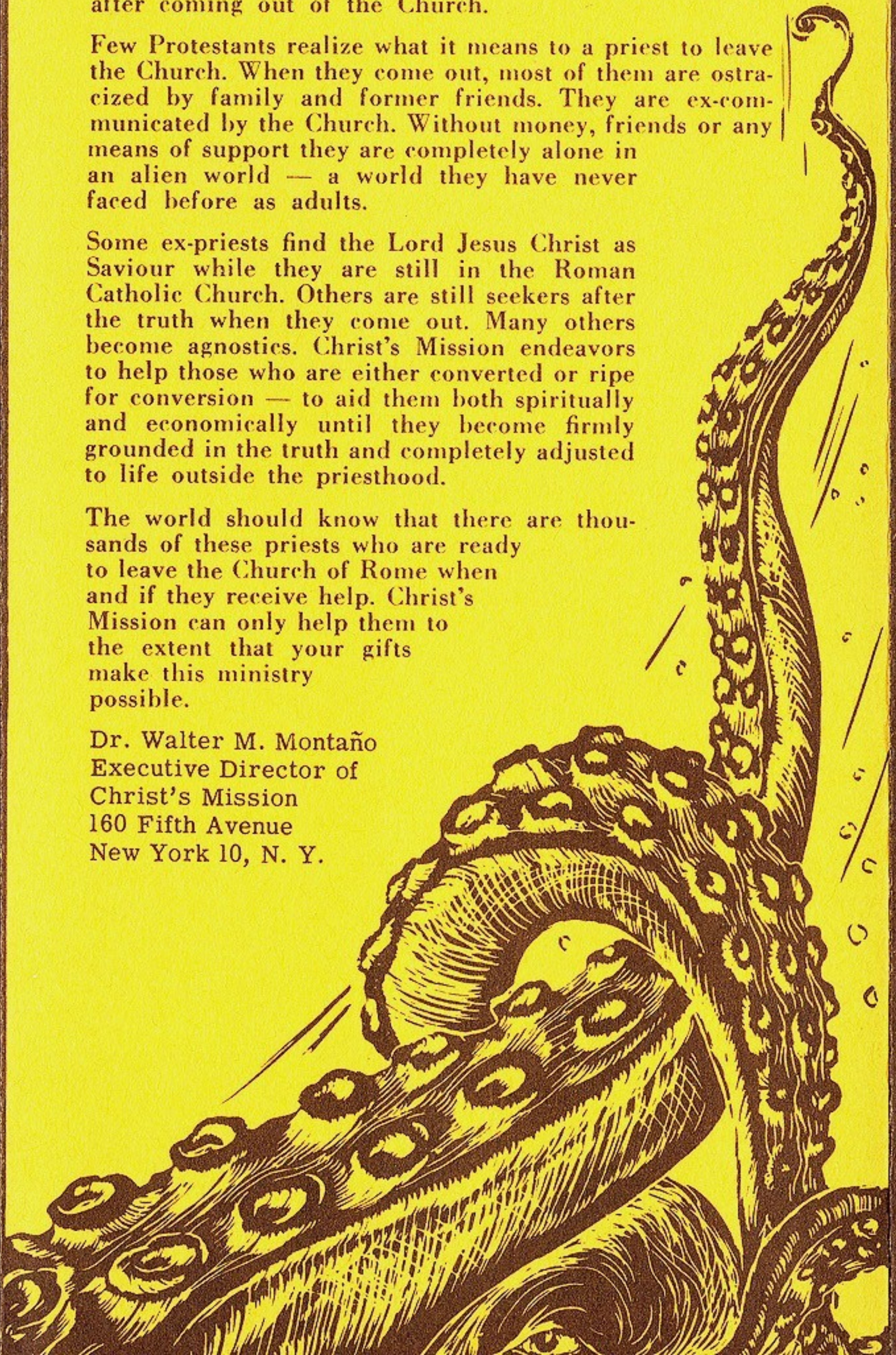
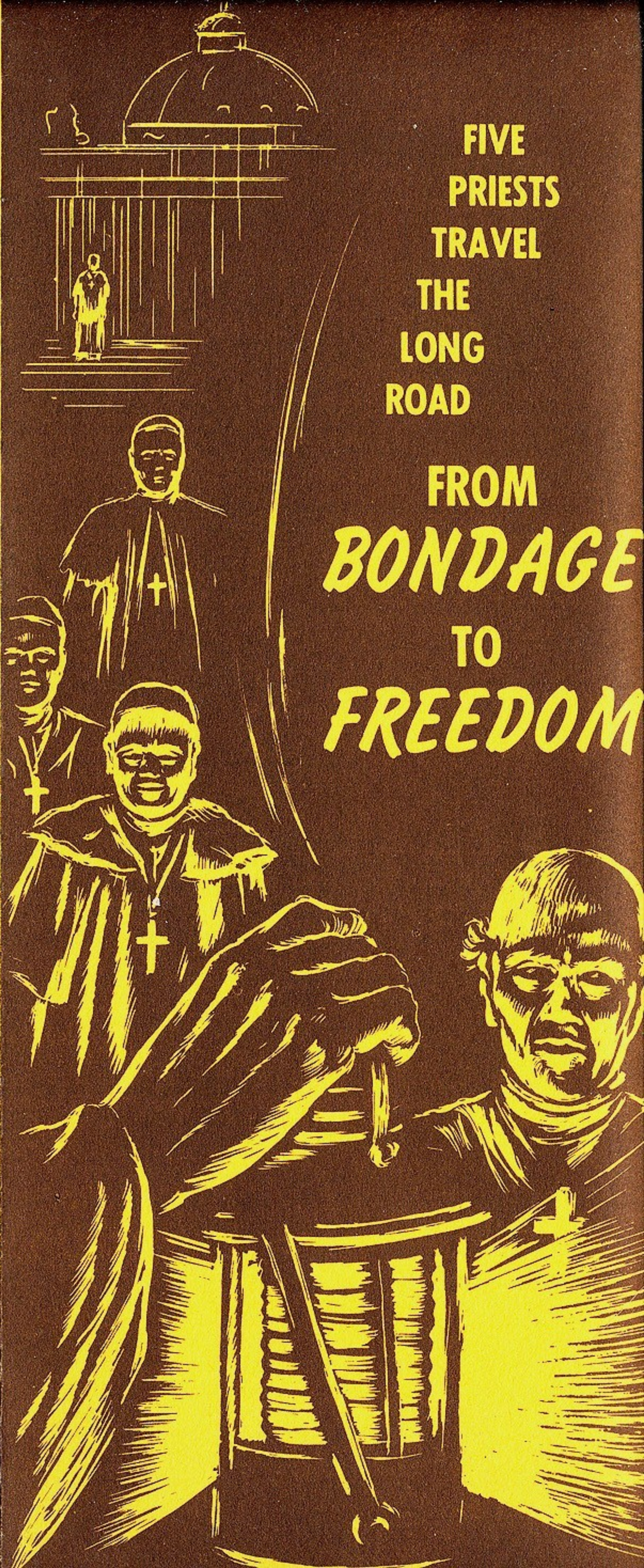
160 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N. Y.





FIVE PRIESTS TRAVEL THE LONG ROAD FROM *BONDAGE* TO *FREEDOM*

"In spite of my many religious activities, I was troubled..."

My name is Italo Manzini. That is not my real name, but I use it for obvious reasons.

I received my training for the Roman Catholic priesthood in Italy and was ordained there in 1936. From 1936 to 1949 I taught in a Roman Catholic Seminary. During this time, in addition to my teaching, I was active in a number of other fields related to the Roman Catholic Church — among these were educational organizations, churches and the Cathedral of our diocese, editorial and journalistic work, youth organizations, social work and anti-communist organizations.

In spite of my many religious activities for the Church, I was troubled in my quiet moments by doubts as to the truth of many Roman Catholic doctrines.

In 1949 I came to the United States for further service to the Church. Here my doubts grew greater and after much thought, I decided to leave the priesthood. This was indeed a hard decision for me to make since I had been so active in the Church.

After making my decision, I sought the help of Christ's Mission. As the result of many long talks with Dr. Montaño, I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour; put all my trust in Him and His Word, the Bible. As a born-again believer, I have a joy and peace I never knew before.

"My body was bathed in blood..."

My name is Jaime Cifunentes. I was born in Colombia, South America. After being educated in a number of Roman Catholic schools, I entered the Franciscan monastery in Cali, Colombia.

In the monastery I practiced many personal sacrifices in the belief that they would bring me special blessings from God. I fasted daily, slept on the hard floor of my cell, and every Monday, Wednesday and Friday I flagellated (lashed) myself with heavy sharp-pointed chains until my body was bathed in blood.

However, the longer I stayed in the monastery and the more I saw of life there, the more disillusioned I became. I found that my superiors did not believe many of the Roman Catholic teachings and that the lives of many of them were full of sin and vice.

In deep spiritual distress, I visited a Protestant missionary whom I had known before and whose sacrificial life had always impressed me. I told him of my unhappiness and spiritual dissatisfaction. At the same time, I got hold of a New Testament and, reading it in my monastery cell, I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour.

On July 15, 1950, through the help of the missionary and Christ's Mission, I escaped, under cover of darkness, from the monastery and sailed for the United States.

Since then, through the support of Christ's Mission, I have been studying at an evangelical seminary preparing for the Protestant ministry. Although ostracized by my family and friends and in a strange land, I look back on the past year as the happiest in my life.

"I could not be a hypocrite..."

My name is Angelo LoVallo. I was born in 1914 in Dunmore, Pennsylvania. After 2 years of college, I decided to prepare for the Roman Catholic priesthood. I was sent by my Bishop to St. Mary's university in Baltimore and then to Genoa, Italy to study. In my 3rd and 4th years of study in Genoa, I had many glimmering doubts on the essential doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church — doubts which the explanations of my professors did not dispel.

On May 19, 1940, I was ordained into the Roman Catholic priesthood and in June I returned to the United States to serve the Diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania. From 1940 to 1948 I served as assistant pastor in four different Catholic churches. However, my doubts as to the efficacy of the confession of sins to a priest grew.

After further study of the Bible, I decided that I could not believe in the doctrine of purgatory, the sacrifice of the mass, meritorious works, veneration of saints, confession to priests, infallibility of the Pope and other Roman Catholic doctrines.

I realized that I could not stay in the Church and be a hypocrite, but I had nowhere to go if I left the Church. At this point, God took a hand in my affairs. I received a complimentary copy of THE CONVERTED CATHOLIC MAGAZINE from Christ's Mission. I read it, and a few months later visited Christ's Mission office.

In January, 1949, I handed in my official letter of resignation to the Bishop of Scranton and thus severed all connection with the Roman Catholic Church. Since leaving the Church and being associated as a worker with Christ's Mission I have continually experienced the "peace that passeth all understanding." I have the blessed assurance that my salvation is secure in the Lord Jesus Christ and in Him alone, because I have trusted Him as my personal Saviour.

"I grew sick of the Vatican-inspired paganism in Italy..."

My name is Francis J. Kieda. I was born in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1906. At the age of eight, I became an altar boy in my parochial church. After high school, I entered the Congregation of the Resurrection, a Catholic order whose American headquarters are in Chicago. Following my novitiate in 1925-26, I was sent to St. Louis to study at St. John's Seminary. I received my A.B. degree there and entered the theological school of the Jesuit St. Louis University.

In 1930, I was sent to Italy to complete my seminary studies at the Gregorian University of Rome, and was ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood in 1932. In 1936 I received my doctorate of Canon Law degree in Rome. I returned to the United States and began a teaching career in the Resurrection Scholasticate Seminary in Maryland.

In 1948 I was sent back to Italy by my superiors to begin research work on the life of one of the founders of my Congregation whom the American branch wished to have canonized. In Rome, I grew sick of the uncouth Vatican-inspired paganism and superstition in Italy. A few months later, while reading the New Testament, I realized that I was a sinner and must fully accept Christ as Redeemer. I accepted Him and at that moment became convinced that the Pope and the Church could not grant redemption.

After returning to the United States, I contacted Christ's Mission. They offered me all the assistance I might need, and today I am attending an evangelical seminary in preparation for the Protestant ministry, through the support of Christ's Mission.